

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ ARN - MR. KORN

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APPROVED BY NEA - MR. ATHERTON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 043729

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E. O. 11652: ADS, GDS

TAGS: SCUL, IZ, US

SUBJECT: IRAQI INVITATIONS TO US CITIZENS FOR PALESTINIAN

FILM FESTIVAL

1. MR. JOHN BLAKE, DIRECTOR OF JOB CORPS, INFORMED DEPARTMENT (NEA/ ARN) MARCH 1 THAT HE HAD BEEN INVITED BY IRAQI INTERESTS SECTION WASHINGTON TO VISIT IRAQ MARCH 19-23 WITH GROUP INCLUDING PRESIDENT OF SHAW UNIVERSITY. AT TIME BLAKE (WHO IS NOT FAMILIAR WITH MIDDLE EAST SCENE) WAS UNCERTAIN OF PURPOSE OF INVITATION BUT THOUGHT IT CONNECTED WITH EDUCATIONAL WORK SHAW IS DOING IN IRAQ. IN RESPONSE MR. BLAKE' S REQUEST FOR ADVICE, DEPTOFF SAID WE SAW NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE AND THOUGHT ACCEPTANCE OF INVITATION WOULD EASE WAY FOR USINT BAGHDAD TO UNDERTAKE SIMILAR ACTIVITIES IN IRAQ AT APPROPRIATE TIME. MR. BLAKE SAID HE WOULD PROBABLY BE MAKING TRIP AS PRIVATE CITIZEN SINCE HE EXPECTS TO RESIGN FROM JOB CORPS DIRECTORSHIP MARCH 16, DAY OF SCHEDULED DEPARTURE FOR BAGHDAD.

2. ON MARCH 8 MR. BLAKE CAME TO DEPARTMENT WITH LETTER FROM IRAQI INTERESTS SECTION FORMALLY EXTENDING INVITATION TO BE GUEST OF GOI FOR " FIRST INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS AND PROGRAMS ON PALESTINE." DEPARTMENT HAS INFORMED MR. BLAKE THAT WHILE WE DO WANT TO PROMOTE
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CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH IRAQ THIS PUTS INVITATION IN MUCH

DIFFERENT LIGHT. UNFORTUNATELY, AN EVENT OF THIS TYPE
COULD WELL INCLUDE STAGING OF SCURRILOUS ANTI- AMERICAN
PROPAGANDA. DEPTOFF SAID THAT IF MR. BLAKE WERE GOING
WHILE STILL IN EMPLOY OF USG DEPARTMENT WOULD OPPOSE,
BUT EVEN AS PRIVATE CITIZEN WE WOULD DISCOURAGE HIS
ACCEPTING INVITATION. MR. BLAKE SAID HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD
AND WOULD FIND EXCUSE TO DECLINE INVITATION.

3. DEPT. CONSIDERING ADVISING PRESIDENT SHAW UNIVERSITY,
AND OTHERS INVOLVED, IN SAME SENSE. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR
COMMENT AND ANY INFORMATION YOU HAVE ON PALESTINIAN FILM
FESTIVAL. ROGERS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** STADIS

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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